THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P.A. SANGMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Complaints under Section 406/409 IPC have been filed in both the cases recently and the matter is being followed up with the Police authorities.

Ban on Recruitment

*268. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ban on recruitment in Central Government offices and public sector undertakings has been withdrawn; and

(b) what is the amount saved by Government during the ban period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EXPENDITURE (SHRI B. K. GADHVI): (a) and (b) The Government have recently modified the guidelines regarding filling up of vacancies. According to the revised guidlines, subject to fulfilment of certain conditions, vacancies both Plan and non-Plan arising due to promotion, retirement, death, resignation, dismissal, removal or deputation etc. can now be filled up.

Likewise, the Department of Public Enterprices of the Ministry of Industry have already reviewed the orders regarding ban on recruitment in the public sector enterprises. It is not considered feasible to impose an absolute ban on recruitment to posts in the public sector enterprises which are run on commercial lines and are dealing with production and supply of essential goods and services. Accordingly, subject to certain conditions relaxation has been permitted on recruitment to vacancies in public sector enterprises.

It is not possible to make an estimate of the expenditure that would have occurred had there been no ban on fresh recruitment. As such an estimate of the amount saved on this account is not available.

Raids conducted by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence

*269. SHRI KAPIL VERMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence carried out a countrywide raid on 96 business and residential premises for offences under the Customs Act on 22 July, 1986; if so, with what results; and

(b) whether the D.R.I. also undertook a strict inspection of the baggage at the international airports the same day, if so, what was the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) On 21st/22nd July, 1986, the officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence launched a country-wide operation, code-named "RANA" in co-ordination with the Customs authorities for unearthing customs offences and foreign exchange racketeering. During the operation, 96 business and residential premises, throughout the country, were searched. As a result, contraband goods worth Rs. 1.63 crores, Indian and foreign currency worth Rs. 12.52 lakhs and shares of face value Rs. 1.52 crores suspected to be in the names of fictitious firms, were seized. Incriminating documents indicating over-invoicing, non-repatriation of export proceeds and other FERA violation to the tune of Rs.12.01 crores and holding in foreign banks worth US 19 million were also seized.

(b) During the Operation. 100 per cent examination of incoming passengers' baggage and 10 per cent examination of the outgoing passengers' baggage were undertaken at all the international airports. As a result,

1521 totals of foreign marked gold valued at Rs. 37.5 lakhs were seized at Bombay and Madras. One passenger was arrested in this connection at Bombay. In addition, contraband goods valued at Rs. 1.23 lakhs were seized and additional duty of Rs. 9.24 lakhs was collected over the average daily collections.

Cooperation amongst the member countries of SAARC

*270. SHRI RAOOF VALIULLAH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Study Groups of the first SAARC Conference had identified areas of cooperative ventures by member countries;

(b) if so, what were the areas identified and whether any major project of common interest has been launched since then or is expected to be launched before the second summit in Bangalore;

(c) whether adequate preparatory work has been done for the second summit due in November this year; and

(d) whether India propose to take the initiative to start collaborative ventures in areas like telecommunications and meteorology in which she is relatively advanced; if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) to (d) The first South Asian Summit was held in Dhaka in December, 1985 when the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was launched and a Charter for it was adopted. Before the Summit, cooperation among the South Asian countries had been initiated under an Integrated Programme of Action adopted by the first meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the South Asian countries held in New Delhi in August, 1983. The Programme covered 9 agreed areas of cooperation:

(i) agriculture;

(ii) health and population activities;

(iii) meteorology;

(iv) postal services;

(v) rural development;

(vi) scientific and technological cooperation;

(vii) sports, arts and culture;

(viii) telecommunication; and

(ix) transport

Activities in each of the 9 areas were guided and coordinated by a Technical Committee.

Cooperation in the above areas have been mainly in the form of seminars, workshops, studies and surveys and compilations of existing capabilities in the countries of the region which can be utilised by the other countries. Technical Committees have also been examining a number of proposals for establishing regional institutions. Some of these are: Regional Meteorological Research Centre Regional Agriculture information Centre, Regional Centre for Postal Research and Development, Regional Software Centre in the field of Telecommunications networking of institutions involved in bio-gas and solar energy & Regional Centre for Tuberculosis.

At the Dhaka Summit, the Heads of State/Government decided to convene two study groups, one for exploring the possibilities of cooperation for combating terrorism in the region and the other for dealing with the problems of drug trafficking and abuse. They also decided to convene a Ministerial meeting on the role of women in development and another one for formulating a common approach to international economic issues. These two Ministerial meetings and that of the Study Group on Terrorism have already been held. Their recommendations as well as important proposals under consideration by the Technical Committees, are going to be considered at the meetings of the SAARC Standing Committee and Council of Ministers to be held in Dhaka in the second week of August.

India has played its due role in initiating proposals and implementing those allotted to it, under the aegis of SAARC. Preparatory work for the second SAARC